

# Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

VOLUME XXI

ASHLAND, O., WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 1899

No. 16

## Governor Rollins' Proclamation

Governor Rollins of New Hampshire, in his Fast Day proclamation, says in part: "The decline of the Christian religion, particularly in our own rural communities, is a marked feature of the times, and steps should be taken to remedy it." We are not among those who say that the former times were better than the present, nor do we believe that the spiritual forces brought into the world and sent into the world by the Lord Jesus Christ are destined to fail of their divine mission. If a community here and there exhibits a moral and religious retrogression, we do not lay it to the inherent weakness of religion, neither do we believe that it argues anything against the power or the destiny of the Gospel message, even in the particular community indicated. Short sighted people naturally become alarmed at those periodical and temporary reactions which are characteristic of human nature, and which in larger or less degree have always marked the history of religion. It is quite possible that one of those reactions is now manifest in New Hampshire, and in other places as well. But the pendulum will begin to swing the other way, some of these days, and the period of spiritual declension will be followed by a period of spiritual revival. There is always abundant reason why God's people should be always alert, always watchful against spiritual reactions, either in themselves or in the community. We have never yet found a different Christian experience either in ourselves or in others. The period of exaltation is followed by the period of depression. We vibrate between the clear and dim vision, between power and weakness, the joy of victory and the sorrow of failure, between energy and lethargy, wings and clogs, seventh chapter of Romans and eighth chapter. This is the usual experience. There are disciples who claim to dwell securely and uninterruptedly in the eighth chapter, but if there is such an experience, it is exceptional. Paul himself had not attained unto it. It is of the ordinary and not of the extraordinary Christian experience that we speak, and that teaches us that tho we are subject to spiritual reactions, yet an honest purpose, a consecrated will, a firm reliance upon God's grace, and a diligent use of the available means of grace may always hasten the returning wave of spir-

ituality, and make it lift us higher than ever toward the perfect ideal in God. The process in the individual and in the community is precisely the same. Is there a reaction in your community, or possible in your church, toward the world? Do you represent the spiritualities, the power, the authority of the Gospel in that community? If so, then why do you not sit down and plan an intelligent campaign in God's interest, and in the interests of the religion? The first part of the process is easy and usual. One can sit down without much effort and remain down like a log, either unconscious of the baneful activities of evil all around him, or indifferent, or what is equally as bad, inefficient, incapable of organization, incapable of leadership. "When satan cometh in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall raise up a standard against him." Let the standard bearer lift up that standard. Let him issue the trumpet call: "Who is on the Lord's side?" Let him gather around him the choice spirits in his community and in his congregation. Let him hew a way to the throne of grace, and bring power down upon himself and his people. Let him "cry aloud and spare not." Let him rebuke open iniquity without fear. With perseverance, with untiring energy, with skillful organization, with persistent supplication, with zeal for God and love for souls, he will soon beat back the incoming flood, he will soon see the forces of satan retreating, and his will be the joy of victory.

That flood tide of iniquity will inevitably return, invited often, tempted often, by the grossest carelessness upon the part of those whose duty it is to guard the community against it. What would we think of a general who after routing an enemy and driving him from the field should then retire in fancied security to his camp, establish no posts, no sentries, build no fortifications to hold the conquered ground? Behold this general, his officers, his men, feasting in the camp, idly lounging in their tents. No sentry watches, darkness comes, the enemy so lately routed beholds the opportunity for revenge. The carelessness of the victorious adversary tempts him beyond all the counsel of his fears. He steals upon the unguarded camp, and the victory of yesterday is turned into the defeat and slaughter of today. Such a general as that, you say, should be court-martialed and shot, but, "Thou art the man." Where were your sentries? Where your fortifications? What measures did you take to hold your ground? What plan devise to foil the cunning of the enemy?